



Dairy 30x20 grants available for farm innovations, financial planning

Release Date: November 25, 2014

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MADISON – “Grow Wisconsin Dairy” means different things for different families. For one La Crosse-area family, it means redesigning a barn and installing robotic milkers so Dad can keep milking cows until his son can finish college and come back to run the farm.

For a Sturgeon Bay family, it means hiring a crop specialist so they can improve the feed quality they’re growing on the same number of acres they’ve farmed for generations. Another family might want to hire financial specialists to redesign their farm’s business plan. Maybe for them, transitioning to a grass-based dairy might be the key to turning a profit that will support the next generation.

Whatever the vision, the Grow Wisconsin Dairy 30x20 Grant program can help make it happen.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is now accepting applications for the next round of Dairy 30x20 grants. Farms looking to innovate could use the grant money to cover the costs involved with business planning, financial analysis, farm transition planning or farm transfers. Projects such as designing new milking parlors, robotic milking systems or waste-handling systems would qualify for the grant.

Farmers planning to improve management practices in their current operations could use the grant to hire specialists in herd health, managed grazing or organic production. This could include the cost of dairy nutritionists, veterinarians or agronomists.

Recipients could be awarded as much as \$5,000; they must pay a cost share of 20 percent of the total grant amount.

The 30x20 program was developed to support Wisconsin’s dairy industry in the long term.

“The demand is growing locally and around the world for the safe, high-quality dairy products produced and processed in Wisconsin,” DATCP Secretary Ben Brancel said. “This grant can help Wisconsin’s dairy farms improve efficiencies and enhance profitability in order to keep meeting that demand.”

Applications are due to DATCP by Jan. 15, 2015. Application materials and more information are available at http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Dairy_Farming/Grow_Wisconsin_Dairy_Grant.

These grants are just one service of the Grow Wisconsin Dairy 30x20 Team. DATCP can help farmers connect with dairy resources year round. For more information, call toll-free at 855-WI DAIRY (855-943-2479) or email GrowWisconsinDairy@wi.gov.